

Holy Resurrection Russian Orthodox Church  
Mission Road and Kashevaroff Street  
Kodiak  
Kodiak Island  
Alaska

HABS No. AK-57

HABS

AK

12-KODI,

4-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
HOLY RESURRECTION RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

HABS No. AK-57

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AK  
12-KODI,  
4-

Location: Mission Road and Kashevaroff Street, Kodiak, Kodiak Island, Alaska.

Present Owner: Alaska Diocese, the Orthodox Church in America.

Present Occupant: Holy Resurrection Russian Orthodox Church.

Present Use: Church.

Significance: A number of historic Russian Orthodox churches survive in Alaska, built by Native congregations in traditional forms. Constructed in 1946-47 after a fire burned the previous church, this church has a cruciform plan, rare among Russian Orthodox churches in Alaska.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Date of erection: 1946-47.<sup>1</sup>
2. Builder: Ralph Shupp.<sup>2</sup>
3. Original plans and construction: The church is in an irregular cruciform plan with a cross-gable roof. The three-story belltower is crowned by an onion dome, as is the cupola over the nave. The building was originally sided with shingles.
4. Alterations and additions: The shingles have been removed for the current renovation.

B. Previous churches on the site:

Kodiak was the home of the first Russian Orthodox priests assigned to the Russian colony. In 1794, ten missionaries from the monastery of Valaam arrived in Kodiak. There, they met resistance from the manager of the colony, Aleksandr Andreevich Baranov, who thought that the priests were luxuries in a seriously undermanned colony. In turn, the clergy were appalled at the immoral and cruel behavior of the Russians toward the natives. In the spring of 1795, Archimandrite Ioasaph, leader of the group, complained that no church had been provided for them:

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<sup>1</sup> Matushka Marie Kreta, "Holy Resurrection Russian Orthodox Church of Kodiak," Orthodox Alaska 6 (January 1977): 34.

<sup>2</sup> Archpriest Joseph P. Kreta, "National Register Nomination: Holy Resurrection Church" (National Park Service, 1977), 8.

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We do not have a travelling church even now. I asked the clerks and Aleksandr Andreevich [Baranov] to give us canvas for a tent but did not get it. Aleksandr Andreevich volunteered to build a small church here and construction began on November 21st. It was to be four sazhen [28 feet] square, with an addition of 1-1/2 sazhen [10 feet] for the altar, but the log walls are still not ready, so I have nothing to report to the Most Reverent Metropolitan.<sup>3</sup>

The church was completed by 1796, when Baranov referred to it as the "new church."<sup>4</sup> Illustrations of this church are unclear, but it appears to have been a complex structure with two cupolas and an irregular plan.<sup>5</sup>

Captain 1st Rank Adolph Etholen, chief manager of the Russian-American Company from 1840 to 1845, undertook extensive construction projects, including a new church on Kodiak Island.<sup>6</sup> Tikhmenev described it thus:

A church surrounded by poplars stands on a hill. Besides the main altar of this church there are two chapels. One of these was built by the Most Reverend Innokentii, and the other was built at the expense of the former manager of the Kad'iak office, F. I. Murgin.<sup>7</sup>

This is probably the church pictured in an 1840s drawing, with several cupolas and an irregular plan.<sup>8</sup>

In 1873-74, a new church was constructed.<sup>9</sup> It was described in 1895:

It is constructed of wood, paneled inside with narrow planks, painted white outside with oil paint, and the roof is covered with tile. In outward appearance it is no different than our typical wooden village churches in forested provinces. It

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<sup>3</sup> P. A. Tikhmenev, A History of the Russian-American Company, Volume 2: Documents (orig. pub. 1863; trans. Dmitri Krenov, ed. Richard A. Pierce and Alton S. Donnelly, Kingston: Limestone Press, 1979), 77.

<sup>4</sup> P. A. Tikhmenev, A History of the Russian-American Company, Volume 1 (orig. pub. 1963; trans. and ed. Richard A. Pierce and Alton S. Donnelly, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1978), 47.

<sup>5</sup> Some illustrations are listed below in section III.A.1.

<sup>6</sup> Tikhmenev, 1: 374.

<sup>7</sup> Tikhmenev, 1: 411.

<sup>8</sup> Cited below in section III.A.2.

<sup>9</sup> Marie Kreta, 34.

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contains three altars.<sup>10</sup>

Constructed of hewn logs, it was in a cruciform plan. At the crossing, a large octagonal cupola supported a lantern and a small onion dome. A two-story square belltower supported an octagonal belfry. Although all of the elements of this church are the same as the present church, the transepts were much longer, and the central cupola much larger on the earlier church. The onion dome over the belfry was small and elongated; both onion domes were much smaller than those now on the church. A photograph of 1888 or 1889 shows the earlier church with exposed log walls, but by 1895 these walls had been clad in clapboards.<sup>11</sup> The windows in the earlier photograph are flat-arched, six-over-six-light double-hung sash; in the later photograph, they have two-over-two lights.

## PART II. DESCRIPTION OF EXTERIOR

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Complex in form, this church has a cruciform plan and a three-story belltower.
2. Condition of fabric: The church is currently undergoing repairs.

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The church is in an irregular cruciform plan, measuring approximately 68' in length and 44' at its widest point.
2. Foundations: Concrete. There is a polished granite cornerstone, with a date of 1946.
3. Walls: The siding has been recently removed. The walls currently have tarpaper over diagonal planks. The trim is painted light blue.
4. Structural system, framing: Light wood frame.
5. Porches: There is a one-story porch at the entrance, with new wood stairs, flooring, a simple balustrade, and temporary columns. It has a pyramidal roof with green asphalt shingles.

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<sup>10</sup> "Concerning the Orthodox Mission in America," October 14, 1895, translated by Sister Victoria, Orthodox Alaska 6 (January 1977): 37.

<sup>11</sup> See illustrations cited below in section III.A.3.

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6. Chimneys: There is a concrete chimney on the exterior of the south side.
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: There are new double doors, with glass and exposed wood. The back door is in the north corner; it is a metal door with a metal storm door.
  - b. Windows: The gothic-arched windows have rippled glass which is translucent but not clear. There are triple windows in the transepts.
8. Roof:
  - a. Shape, covering: The cross-gable roof has green asphalt shingles.
  - b. Cornice, eaves: The cornice is molded, with returns on the gables.
  - c. Cupola: The octagonal cupola has an asphalt-shingled polygonal roof, surmounted by an onion dome. The cupola has gothic-arched windows on each side.
  - d. Belltower: The square belltower is two stories, with a belfry at the third story. The belltower has a gable roof at the level of the roof of the nave, then rises again for approximately 2' where it ends in a pyramidal roof, which is flat in the center to support the belfry. The belfry, smaller in plan than the belltower, is octagonal with gothic-arched openings on each side. The belfry is surmounted by an onion dome.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The nave and sanctuary are each open spaces. The amvon at the east end of the nave is three steps above the nave floor. The nave has six pairs of pews, symmetrically arranged. There is a choir loft in the back of the nave.
2. Flooring: The floors are covered with linoleum.
3. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls and ceiling are plaster. There is a wainscot of vertical boards.
4. Decorative features: The iconostas, divided into five parts horizontally, is white with gold trim. Vertical elements are stylized versions of fluted pilasters, with the fluting picked out with gold paint. The east walls of the transepts also have an iconostas, in the same design as the main one, but without doors.

The octagonal dome rises through the roof.

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D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The building faces southwest, but for simplicity in this report the building has been treated as if it faced west, with its sanctuary on the east end. The church lies alongside a heavily travelled road, Mission Road, and has a small churchyard with a few graves.
2. Landscape features: The belfry from the previous church is in the churchyard, on the south side of the church. It is an octagonal building, clad in novelty siding, with a polygonal roof supporting an onion dome.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Early views:

1. First Church (built ca. 1795-96)

A. V. Efimov, Atlas of Geographical Discoveries in Siberia and Northwest America, XVII-XVIII Centuries (Moscow, 1963). A drawing from this book is reproduced in Russian America: The Forgotten Frontier, ed. Barbara Sweetland Smith and Redmond J. Barnett (Tacoma: Washington State Historical Society, 1990), p. 76, and dated ca. 1794. Another drawing from Efimov's Atlas, apparently by a different artist, was reproduced in Russia's American Colony, ed. S. Frederick Starr (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987), p. 173, and dated 1798. Both are general views of Kodiak, and show the church to be irregular in form, with several cupolas.

Yuri F. Lisiansky, A Voyage Round the World . . . (London, 1814). The same drawing from this volume is reproduced in Starr, p. 176, and in Smith and Barnett, p. 76. Again a general view of Kodiak, it is dated 1804-05 and shows the church as clearly rectangular in form.

Georg H. von Langsdorff, Bemerkungen auf einer Reise um die Welt . . . (Frankfurt, 1812). This drawing, dated 1808, is reproduced in Starr, p. 178. Also a general view of Kodiak, it shows the church more as it appeared in the Efimov illustrations, with an irregular plan and several cupolas.

2. Second church (built 1840s)

A drawing by I. G. Voznesenskii, from 1842-43, is reproduced in E. E. Blomkvist, "A Russian Scientific Expedition to California and Alaska, 1839-1849: The Drawings of I. G. Voznesenskii," trans. Basil Dmytryshyn and E. A. P. Crownhart-Vaughan, Oregon Historical Quarterly 73 (June 1972): 117.

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3. Third church (built 1873-74)

Photograph of church with log walls exposed, 1888 or 1889, 22-FA-252, National Archives and Records Service, Washington, DC. A copy of this photograph is in the Baranof Museum in Kodiak, P-356-9.

Photograph of church with clapboard siding, 1899, 70-167-17-5, Baranof Museum, Kodiak.

Other photographs of this church are found in the Anchorage Museum of History and Art. Two of the exterior are B67.1.22 and B69.13.85, and one of the interior, B65.18.572.

B. Bibliography:

"Concerning the Orthodox Mission in America," October 14, 1895, translated by Sister Victoria, Orthodox Alaska 6 (January 1977): 36-46.

Kreta, Archpriest Joseph P. "National Register Nomination: Holy Resurrection Church." National Park Service, 1977.

Kreta, Matushka Marie. "Holy Resurrection Russian Orthodox Church of Kodiak," Orthodox Alaska 6 (January 1977): 34-35.

Tikhmenev, P. A. A History of the Russian-American Company, Volume I. Orig. pub. 1863. Trans. and ed. Richard A. Pierce and Alton S. Donnelly. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1978.

\_\_\_\_\_. A History of the Russian-American Company, Volume II: Documents. Orig. pub. 1863. Trans. Dmitri Krenov, ed. Richard A. Pierce and Alton S. Donnelly. Kingston: Limestone Press, 1979.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

Documentation of the Holy Resurrection Russian Orthodox Church was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER), a division of the National Park Service, the state of Alaska and the Icon Preservation Task Force. The project was executed under the general direction of Robert J. Kapsch, chief of HABS/HAER, and Boyd Evison, Alaska Regional Director, National Park Service. Recording was carried out during summer 1989 by Steven M. Peterson, project director; Jean Swearingen, curator; John Lowe III, photographer; and Alison K. Hoagland, historian, who prepared this report.